

## ***Readiness Centers: Activities and Initiatives***

This document provides a summary of the activities and initiatives for each of the six regional Readiness Centers with regard to establishing governance structures and building partnerships with local, regional, and state stakeholders; providing professional development and instructional services to educators; and convening stakeholders to address key education priorities.

### **Berkshire Readiness Center (BRC)**

#### *Governance*

- The lead partners for the BRC, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), the Berkshire Compact for Education, and Berkshire Community College (BCC) have established an advisory group that is focused on setting strategy, ensuring the alignment of existing and proposed programs with BRC goals, and identifying additional partners and programs as needed.
- This advisory group is leveraging the expertise and resources of existing partnerships with the Berkshire Compact for Education; the Executive Committee for the Compact has been complemented by additional representatives from early childhood, K-12, vocational education, workforce development, and business partners, and also includes the Regional Assistance Director for the District and School Assistance Center (DSAC).

#### *Professional Development and Instructional Services*

- The BRC has begun to offer services that are related to several priority issues: 1) aligning goals and benchmarks to better ensure that students' transitions between grade levels are seamless; 2) developing activities that increase students' aspirations and levels of educational attainment, particularly with regard to higher education; 3) expanding and coordinating professional development activities for educators; and 4) ensuring access to educational resources from early childhood through higher education and beyond.
  - In collaboration with the Superintendents' Roundtable, the BRC offered a session in October 2009 for over 300 educators focused on raising student aspirations and closing participation gaps, and a follow-up session attended by 100 educators was offered in March 2010.
  - Sessions related to increasing students' interest in achievement in STEM fields and student visits to college campuses were organized during the spring of 2010.
  - MCLA will offer a Leadership Academy for school administrators in August 2010.

- A county-wide training program focused on Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies will be offered in October 2010.

### *Convening Stakeholders*

- BCC has convened high school teachers and higher education faculty members to develop high school mathematics classes that will better prepare students for college-level courses, and BCC and MCLA will convene educators to improve students' readiness for college-level courses related to writing.

## **Central Massachusetts Readiness Center (CMRC)**

### *Governance*

- The lead partners for CMRC (Fitchburg State College, Worcester State College, and the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association) established a Governing Board that includes all constituents in the region including public and private colleges, pre-K through 12 schools, educational collaboratives, and charter schools.
- Goals and priorities for the CMRC are being refined in collaboration with the members of the Governing Board, and the regional partners are using different data collection methods (including surveys of educators) to identify specific needs across the region.

### *Professional Development and Instructional Services*

- A series of professional development programs related to using educator evaluations to promote student learning, improving literacy instruction, and developing differentiated instructional strategies (among others) have been and will continue to be offered by the primary partners for the CMRC.
- Through the newly established network of CMRC regional partners, professional development offerings are more readily advertised to educators throughout the region; the continued expansion of the network will promote additional collaboration among the partners with regard to the development and implementation of future programs.

### *Convening Stakeholders*

- The members of the Governing Board are working in collaboration with DSAC staff members to continually meet with different stakeholders in the region to assess local and regional needs, articulate the purpose and functions of the CMRC, and refine programmatic priorities for the CMRC.
- The CMRC sponsored a meeting in March 2010 for district superintendents and other stakeholders to discuss the phase 2 application for the Race to the Top program; this meeting resulted in the identification of key issues of concern for the superintendents, and strategies that will be implemented by the CMRC to address these concerns.

## **Greater Boston Readiness Center (GBRC)**

### *Governance*

- The primary partners for the GBRC (Framingham State College as the lead partner, UMASS Boston, Wheelock College, Massachusetts Bay Community College, and the four regional educational collaboratives) have established a Steering Committee that is continually identifying new partners to extend the membership reach of the GBRC so that it includes all districts, educational organizations, and cultural and business partners in the region.
- The Steering Committee includes the Regional Director for the DSAC, superintendents and district administrators from multiple districts across the region, and representatives from the Museum of Science; additional representatives from early education and out-of-school-time programs are being identified for the Committee.

### *Professional Development and Instructional Services*

- The GBRC will provide STEM-focused professional development and instructional services to educators across the continuum, and one of the primary tasks of the Steering Committee has been the establishment of programmatic priorities for the coming year.
- Based on ongoing discussions with Steering Committee members and district representatives as well as the review of student performance data, the GBRC will provide targeted support regarding middle school mathematics instruction as follows:
  - Grades 5 – 8 and higher education curriculum specialists will develop an instrument to identify best practices, particularly with regard to particular subgroups of students such as students receiving special education services; and
  - GBRC regional partners will work with districts to identify specific professional development and instructional needs for grades 5 – 8 educators to develop and implement targeted professional development and mentoring programs.

### *Convening Stakeholders*

- The members of the Steering Committee are convening stakeholders across sectors to determine how best to develop targeted services and activities that will address the priority need for the region – improving the quality of middle school mathematics instruction.

## **Northeast Regional Readiness Center (NRRC)**

### *Governance*

- The NRRC has established a Board of Directors that includes 32 representatives from institutions of higher education, school districts, charter schools, and community-based

organizations, and a small Executive Committee that includes representatives from all sectors.

- Five subcommittees that are aligned to NRRC programmatic priorities have been established, and all of the regional partners serve on one of these subcommittees: Early Childhood/Out-of-School-Time Programs (ECE/OOST); STEM; Communities of Practice; College/Career Readiness; and Assessment and Evaluation.
- Each subcommittee also includes representatives who are not currently members of the Board to ensure that opinions from throughout the region are well represented. The goal of the NRRC is to ensure that for every initiative offered, all stakeholders and sectors are involved in the work.

#### *Professional Development and Instructional Services*

- The subcommittees have been engaged in activities to develop and implement professional development programs.
  - ECE/OOST members are preparing a proposal to respond to the professional development Request for Responses that has been issued by the Department of Early Education and Care (North Shore Community College is the lead partner for this effort, and representatives are working in collaboration with team members from other community colleges, Salem State College, and Merrimack College).
  - The College/Career Readiness team organized a forum for multiple stakeholders in April 2010 to share and assess successful models related to vertical curriculum articulation, teaching 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, working with English language learners, and recovery programs, and a subgroup submitted a Teacher Quality Partnership grant related to improving college readiness in mathematics.
  - The Communities of Practice team members are sharing information about current research and existing initiatives in the region in order to determine how best to serve the needs of school districts.
  - Assessment and Research team members are working with DSAC staff members to identify NRRC activities that will complement DSAC services for targeted districts and schools.
- All teams are conducting inventories of high-quality professional development resources and also researching models for assessing the effectiveness of professional development with respect to teaching and learning.

#### *Convening Stakeholders*

- All subcommittees are identifying additional partners who can contribute to activities and the core functions of the NRRC.

- The NRRC has established a website hosted by Salem State College and also a GoogleGroup site for team members to share information about NRRC priorities and information about programs and resources in the region.

### **Pioneer Valley Readiness Center (PVRC)**

#### *Governance*

- The lead partners for the PVRC (Westfield State College, UMASS Amherst, the Hampshire Educational Collaborative, and the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative) have established a Governing Board that includes representatives from different sectors, and also two subcommittees to guide the work: 1) Strategic Planning; and 2) Partnership and Outreach.
- Representatives from Greenfield Community College and Holyoke Community College have recently been added to the Governing Board, and the lead partners will invite additional partners to contribute to the PVRC work.

#### *Professional Development and Instructional Services*

- In collaboration with different stakeholders, the regional partners are conducting an inventory of existing teacher preparation programs, professional development programs, mentoring opportunities, and professional networks in the region to identify key areas of need for educators.
- As funding becomes available, the PVRC will organize learning networks related to the following priority areas of interest: STEM instruction; instruction for English language learners; literacy instruction; increasing connections between early childhood programs and K-12 institutions; and developing innovative educator preparation programs.
- The PVRC will also create a process for evaluating teacher preparation programs and professional development resources, and identify which assets are favored by stakeholders across the region.

#### *Convening Stakeholders*

- Early education has been identified as a key priority, and given the wide range of needs across different types of communities, the PVRC is leveraging robust networks of early childhood providers to identify core strategies, secure grant funding, and align programs and services. The PVRC will also host a regional event for Dr. Sherri Killins, the Commissioner of Early Education and Care.
- The PVRC is convening district representatives and other stakeholders regarding the Race to the Top program, and also working with the DSAC to identify complementary services for districts and schools, particularly related to the use of data to inform instruction.

## **Southeastern Massachusetts Readiness Center (SMRC)**

### *Governance*

- The Governing Board of the SMRC includes representatives from higher education, school districts, collaboratives, and workforce investment boards, including several networks such as the CONNECT Consortium (Bridgewater State College, Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Massasoit Community College, and UMASS Dartmouth) and two K-12 networks (the Lighthouse Superintendents' and Assistant Superintendents' Groups).

### *Professional Development and Instructional Services*

- STEM has been identified as one priority for professional development and instructional services, and SMRC partners will leverage existing partnerships with different stakeholders to continue providing professional development programs and develop new opportunities for educators.
  - With support from Massachusetts Math and Science Partnership grants, Bridgewater State College (BSC) is providing professional development courses for educators in several districts across the region.
  - Faculty members from several partner institutions are offering mathematics courses for educators who need extra content and support with regard to developing lesson plans, and MTEL preparation courses are currently being offered by different institutions.
- An ongoing project is to create a master calendar of professional development sessions across the region to reduce fragmentation and the duplication of programs, and the SMRC will coordinate training sessions for the regional partners regarding the use of the software program.

### *Convening Stakeholders*

- The BRC partners are working with existing regional networks such as the Lighthouse Superintendents' Group to evaluate the needs of districts in the region and expand or create targeted professional development programs.
- BSC is serving as the host for the Curriculum Leadership Center, the primary purpose of which is to serve as a professional network for regional curriculum leaders.
- The CONNECT Consortium and the SMRC will organize a conference during the spring of 2011 for higher education faculty members, K-12 administrators and educators, academic support specialists, curriculum coordinators, and policymakers regarding college readiness and vertical alignment of curricula.

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